

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides an apparatus and method for optimizing total costs over the stages of a network of interconnected stages. The method of the present invention includes receiving at least one data set for each of a plurality of interconnected stages, each data set corresponding to an option at the corresponding stage, each data set including a first cost and a second cost. The method further includes determining, based upon the at least one data set, an optimum series of options over a series of the stages by selecting a single option at each stage in the series of the stages that minimizes the sum of total costs over the series of the stages, wherein the total costs is a function of said at least one data set.